

# How People Get to Work on My Island

**Topic(s):**

Employment, commute, transportation, resources, travel

**Grade Level:**

3-4

**Approx. Time Required:**

35 minutes

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

- Create a bar graph to represent data.
- Compare and contrast information found in the bar graph.
- Analyze and answer questions related to the information in the bar graph.

## Introduction

The 2020 Census Statistics in Schools (SIS) program is designed to educate students about the decennial census and to teach them educational concepts and skills, such as data literacy, through the use of census data in the classroom. Responses to the 2020 Census affect plans for hospitals and schools, support for local programs, improvements in emergency services, and construction of roads. They also inform businesses that are looking to add jobs. By educating students about the 2020 Census, you can help encourage a complete count.

The 2020 Census SIS program can be used with educational standards across the country. You can use the topics and learning objectives above to determine which subject and unit plan or theme this activity will best fit into.

## About the 2020 Census

In addition to the information that is built into instructions for this activity, the following points provide an easy, grade-appropriate way to explain the census to your students.

- The decennial census is a count of every person living in the United States and its territories that occurs every 10 years.
- It is important that every person be counted to make sure the government can provide money to each community for things like roads, schools, and hospitals.
- Make sure an adult in your home counts you in the 2020 Census.





## Materials Required

- Printed student worksheets
- Chart paper or whiteboard or blackboard
- A writing utensil for the teacher
- Crayons or colored pencils for students
- One sticky note for each student

## Worksheet Description

Students will use data from State Facts for Students to explore how people get to work on their island compared with how they get to work in other Island Areas. In addition, students will look at changes over time in how people have gotten to work on their island, comparing data from 2000 and 2010. Students will also learn the importance of getting an accurate count in the 2020 Census.

## Before the Activity—10 Minutes

1. Tell students that you want to know their favorite ice cream flavor. Give students two minutes to turn and talk with the student sitting next to them about which ice cream flavor is their favorite. Give each student a sticky note and have them write down their favorite flavor. Then post it on the board or chart paper at the front of the room.
2. Ask students to think of different ways to organize this information. Have them help you come up with five categories of ice cream (you can get creative with the different categories, such as “candy-inspired” or “vanilla-based,” to include as many flavors as possible). Rearrange the sticky notes on the board or chart paper to create a bar graph. Explain to students that this is a bar graph, which is one way to visually represent data.
3. Explain that today the class will be learning about data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau. Tell students:
  - The Census Bureau collects housing, population, and business data for everyone living in the United States and its territories, which includes our island.
  - The largest collection of information the Census Bureau does is known as the decennial census, which happens every 10 years.
  - The data the census collects tells us the number of people that live in our communities, as well as other information about the people.





- This data is used by the federal government to distribute money to communities, like ours, for things like roads, schools, and hospitals.
- The next decennial census is coming in 2020.

Then ask, “Based on what I just told you, why is it important to get an accurate count on the census?”

## During the Activity—20 Minutes

1. Explain that today the class will be researching how people get to work on their island. This is one of the many interesting pieces of information the Census Bureau collects.
2. Hand out student worksheets and direct students’ attention to **Activity Item: Transportation on My Island**. Explain how to read the data chart. Then, as a class, select another island to compare with your own (teacher modeling). Pair students up with a partner and instruct them to complete the tables in their worksheet and then answer Questions #2 through #5 with their partner.

Remind students that to compare means to think of how things are the same or how things are different.

Question #2: Which form of transportation to work was most commonly used on your island in 2010?

*Answers will vary, depending on the island. For instance, students in Guam would record “drive alone.”*

Question #3: On your island, was there an increase or a decrease in use of this form of transportation since 2000?

*Answers will vary, depending on the island. For instance, students in Guam would record “increase.”*

Question #4: Which form of transportation to work was most commonly used on the other island in 2010?

*Answers will vary, depending on the island. For American Samoa, for instance, students would record “carpool.”*

Question #5: On the other island, was there an increase or a decrease in use of this form of transportation since 2000?

*Answers will vary, depending on the island. For American Samoa, for instance, students would record “increase.”*





3. Next, have students create their own bar graphs showing the types of transportation used in one of the Island Areas. Have one partner in each pair create a graph for your own island and the other partner create a graph for the other island.

## After the Activity—5 Minutes

1. Facilitate a classroom discussion around Question #7 on the student worksheet, “Why is it important for the Census Bureau to collect this type of data?”

Have students propose a few ideas, and then explain the following key points:

- Knowing how many people, out of every 100 people, use public transportation helps the government know where to invest more resources in buses and trains.
  - Knowing how many people drive alone or carpool helps the government know where to invest more in roads and bridges.
2. Remind students that the 2020 Census is coming soon. Remind them that the census is a count of all the people living in the United States and its territories and that it also tracks other important information about the people. This data is then used by the federal government to spend money every year on things like roads, schools, and public transportation.

## Home Extension

Teachers, please read the instructions for the students’ homework assignment out loud to the class:

*Take your worksheet home and share it with an adult in your home. Tell them what you learned today. Explain that you compared the data on transportation on your island with the transportation data for another island. Also, tell them about the census and how responding accurately helps the government know when our island needs money for roads, schools, and hospitals.*



## Activity Item: Transportation on My Island

### American Samoa

How People Get to Work	2000	2010
Drive Alone	15.5%	19.7%
Carpool	34.8%	35.3%
Public Transportation*	36.4%	28.1%
Work at Home	3.1%	4.3%

### Guam

How People Get to Work	2000	2010
Drive Alone	69.8%	67.6%
Carpool	23.2%	27.2%
Public Transportation	0.7%	0.4%
Work at Home	1.3%	1.0%

### Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

How People Get to Work	2000	2010
Drive Alone	22.6%	40.1%
Carpool	32.7%	32.5%
Public Transportation	0.6%	0.2%
Work at Home	4.4%	6.0%

### U.S. Virgin Islands

How People Get to Work	2000	2010
Drive Alone	53.9%	58.3%
Carpool	24.3%	22%
Public Transportation	11.2%	8.4%
Work at Home	1.9%	1.9%

Source: *U.S. Census Bureau, State Facts for Students*

<https://www.census.gov/schools/facts/>